

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-134 are presently active in this case; Claims 4-11, 18, 20, 23, 24, 26, 28, 30-32, 35-38, 40, 44-50, 53, 56, 57, 61, 63, 65, 71-78, 85, 87, 90, 91, 93, 95, 97, 98, 102-105, 107, 111-117, 120, 121, 123, 124, 130, and 132 previously withdrawn; and Claims 34 and 101 amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 34, 62, 101, and 129 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter not described in the specification; and Claims 1-3, 12-17, 19, 21, 22, 25, 27, 29, 33, 39, 41-43, 51, 52, 54, 55, 58-60, 62, 64, 66-70, 79-84, 86, 88, 89, 92, 94, 96, 99, 100, 106, 108-110, 118, 119, 122, 125-127, 131, 133, and 134 were allowed.

First, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for allowance of Claims 1-3, 12-17, 19, 21, 22, 25, 27, 29, 33, 39, 41-43, 51, 52, 54, 55, 58-60, 62, 64, 66-70, 79-84, 86, 88, 89, 92, 94, 96, 99, 100, 106, 108-110, 118, 119, 122, 125-127, 131, 133, and 134.

In addition, Applicants wish to thank Examiner Fox for the telephone discussions on March 8 and March 23, 2004. During the March 8th telephone discussion, Applicants presented arguments that Claims 36, 62, 101 and 129 satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. In response to the Examiner's request, Applicants submitted an informal fax including claim changes that clarified that Claims 34 and 101 were fully supported by the specification as originally filed. On March 23, 2004, Examiner Fox indicated that further clarifying amendments should be made to Claims 34 and 101. These amendments are now made herein as discussed below.

Turning now to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, in order to expedite issuance of a patent in this case, Applicants have amended Claims 34 and 101 to

remove the claim limitation of the intersecting restricting means itself “forming a roll-up space.” Specifically, these claims as amended, recite an intersection restricting means or member that restricts intersection of a straight storing means or device with a roll up storing means or device “such that the roll-up storing means (or “roll-up storage” in Claim 101) and straight storing means (“straight storage” in Claim 101) work in cooperation to form a roll-up space within the roll-up storing means for rolling-up the sheet.” Applicants respectfully submit that this use of the intersecting means to enable the straight storing and roll-up storing devices to work in cooperation to form a roll-up space is supported by the specification as originally filed.

In referring to Figures 1 and 2, Applicants' specification at page 11, lines 19 - page 12, line 12 reads as follows:

The first tray 26 is inclined upward from the rear end of the lower unit 200 and implemented by a metallic wire configured like the teeth of a comb. The first tray 26 receives the sheet S being driven out in a direction *d* via a sheet outlet, which is located downstream of the rollers 14a and 14b. When the roll-up guide 27 is located at the roll-up position, the comb-like wire of the first tray 26 and that of the roll-up guide intersect each other. In this condition, part of the first tray 26 serves as an inlet (guiding means) to the roll-up guide 27.

A rod-like stop (metallic wire) 25 extends on the first tray 26 in the widthwise direction of the sheet S. The stop 25 is inclined upward from the front to the rear in the direction of paper conveyance relative to the upper surface (wire) of the first tray 26. The stop 25 therefore intersects the wire of the tray 26. When the tray 26 and the roll-up guide 27 intersect each other, the wire of the guide 27 abuts against the inclined surface of the stop 25 and is restricted thereby.

Thus, the comb like wire of the first tray 26 intersects the comb-like wire of the roll-up guide 27. Applicants submit that if no stopping mechanism is provided, rotation of the comb like wire of the first tray 26 would pass through the spaces of the comb-like wire of the roll-up guide 27 thereby reducing the size of a roll up space provided to receive the paper.

However, as described in the cited text above and shown in Figure 2, at a point of intersection between the first tray 26 and roll-up guide 27, the rod-like stop (metallic wire) 25 extends in a widthwise direction to intersect the wire of the tray 26 to prevent the roll-up guide 26 from passing through the first tray 26. That is, the stop 25 restricts intersection of the tray 26 and roll-up guide 27 which causes the trays to work in cooperation to form a roll up space within the roll-up storage (or means) (c in Figure 2 for example) for rolling up a sheet as now claimed in Claims 34 and 101..

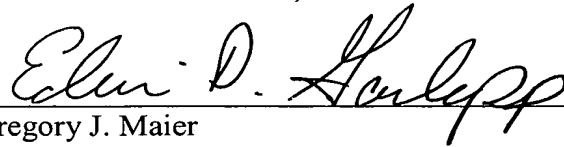
With regard to the rejection of Claims 62 and 129, Applicants respectfully submit that the these claims do not recite that the intersection restricting mean “forms the roll-up space,” which is the function that served as the basis for the 112, first paragraph rejection. Specifically, these claims recite “intersection restricting means included in said straight storing means for restricting intersection of said straight storing means with said roll-up storing means.” Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph should be withdrawn.

For the reasons stated above, Claims 34 and 101, as amended, are fully supported by the specification as originally filed and therefore the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph has been overcome. Moreover, as Claims 34 and 101 have been clarified, Claims 36 and 103 which depend from these claims respectively now have a determinable scope and should be examined on the merits. Finally, as Claims 62 and 129 do not include the objectionable limitation that served as the basis for the 112, first paragraph rejection, the rejection with respect to these claims should be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599
Edwin D. Garlepp
Registration No. 45,330

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220

GJM:EDG:TDM
I:\ATTY\EDG\0557-RICOH\201273\201273AM 1.13.04OA.DOC